RETROSPECTIVE ARCHITECTURAL LITERATURE.

THE ELEMENTS OF ARCHITECTURE.

COLLECTED BY SIR HENRY WOTTON, KNIGHT,

From the best Authors and Examples.

(*Continued from p.* 469.)

FIRST, therefore, touching *Picture*, there doth occur a very pertinent Doubt, which hath been passed over too slightly not only by some Men, but by some Nations; namely, whether this Ornament can well become the Outside of Houses; wherein the Germans hath made so little Scruple, that their best Towns are the most painted, as Augusta and Noremberg. To determine this Question in a Word; It is true that a Story well set out with a good Hand, will every where take a judicious Eye: But yet withal it is as true, that various Colours on the Out-Walls of Buildings have always in them more Delight than Dignity: Therefore I would there admit no Paintings but in Black and White, nor even in that kind any Figures (if the Room be capable), under nine or ten Foot high, which will require no ordinary Artizan; because the Faults are more visible than in small Designs. In unfigured Paintings the noblest is the Imitation of Marbles, and of *Architecture* itself, as *Arches, Friezes, Columns* and the like.

Now for the Inside, here grows another Doubt, whether *Grotesca* (as the Italians) or *Antique* Work (as we call it) should be received against the express Authority of Vitruvius himself, Lib. 7, Cap. 5, where *Pictura* (saith he) *fit ejus, quod est, seu potest esse;* excluding by their severe Definition, all Figures composed of different Natures or Sexes; so as a *Syrene* or a *Centaur* had been intolerable in his Eye: But in this we must take leave to depart from our Master, and the rather, because he spake out of his own Profession, allowing Painters (who have ever been as little limited as Poets) a less Scope in their Imaginations even than the gravest Philosophers, who sometimes do serve themselves of Instances that have no Existence in Nature; as we see in Plato's *Amphisbæna*, and Aristotle's *Hirco-Cervus*. And (to settle this Point) what was indeed more common and familiar among the Romans themselves, than the Picture and Statue of Terminus, even one of their Deities? which yet, if we will consider, is but a piece of *Grotesca*. I am for these Reasons unwilling to Impoverish that Art, though I could wish such medley and motley Designs confined only to the Ornament of Friezes and Borders, their properest Place. As for other storied Works upon Walls, I doubt our Clime is too yielding and moist for such Garnishments; therefore leaving it to the Dweller's Discretion, according to the Quality of his Seat, I will only add a Caution or two about the Disposing of Pictures within.

First, That no Room be furnished with too many, which, in truth, were a Surfeit of Ornament, unless they be Galleries, or some peculiar Repository for Rarities of Art.

Next, that the best Pieces be placed not where there is the least, but where there are the fewest Lights; therefore not only Rooms windowed on both Ends, which we call thorough-lighted, but with two or more Windows on the same Side, are Enemies to this Art; and sure it is, that no Painting can be seen in full Perfection, but (as all Nature is illuminated) by a single Light.

Thirdly, That in the placing there be also some Care also taken, how the Painter did stand in the Working, which an intelligent Eye will easily discover, and that Posture is the most natural; so as Italian Pieces will appear best in a Room where the Windows are high, because they are commonly made to a descending Light, which of all other doth set off Men's Faces in their truest Spirit.

Lastly, That they be as properly bestowed for their Quality, as fitly for their Grace; that is, cheerful Paintings in Feasting and Banquetting-Rooms; graver Stories in Galleries; Landskips and Boscage, and such wild Works, in open Terrasses, or in Summer-Houses (as we call them) and the like.

And thus much of *Picture*, which let me close with this Note, That though my former Discourse may serve, perchance, for some reasonable Leading in the Choice of such Delights, yet let no Man hope by such a speculative Erudition, to discern the masterly and mysterious Touches of Art, but an Artizan himself; to whom therefore we must leave the Prerogative to censure the manner and handling, as he himself must likewise leave some Points, perchance of no less value, to others; as for Example, whether the Story be rightly represented, the Figures in true Action, the Persons suited to their several Qualities, the Affections proper and strong, and such like Observations.

Now for *Sculpture*, I must likewise begin with a Controversy, as before, (falling into this Place) or let me rather call it a very meer Fancy, strangely taken by Palladio, who having noted in an old Arch or two at Verona some part of the Materials already cut in fine Forms, and some unpolished, doth conclude (according to his Logick) upon this Particular, that the Ancients did leave the outward Face of their Marbles or Free Stone without any Sculpture, 'till they were laid and cemented in the Body of the Building; for which likewise he findeth a Reason (as many do now and then very wittily, even before the thing it self be true) that the Materials being left rough, were more manageable in the *Mason's* Hand than if they had been smooth; and that so the Sides might be laid together the more exactly; which Conceit, once taken, he seems to have farther imprinted, by marking in certain storied *Sculptures* of old Time, how precisely the Parts and Lines of the Figures, that pass from one Stone to another, do meet; which he thinks could hardly fall out so right (forgetting while he speaks of ancient Things, the ancient Diligence) unless they had been cut after the joining of the Materials. But all these Inducements cannot countervail the sole Inconvenience of shaking and disjointing the *Commissures* with so many Strokes of the Chissel, besides an incommodious Working on Scaffolds, especially having no Testimony to confirm it, that I have yet seen, among the Records of Art: Nay, it is indeed rather true, that they did square, and carve, and polish their Stone and Marble Works even in the very Cave of the Quarry, before it was hardened by open Air: But (to leave Disputation) I will set down a few positive Notes, for the *placing* of *Sculpture*, because the *chusing* hath been handled before.

That first of all it be not too general and abundant, which would make a House look like a Cabinet; and in this Point, Moral Philosophy, which tempereth Fancies, is the Superintendant of Art.

That especially, there be a due Moderation of this Ornament in the first Approach; where our Authors do more commend (I mean about the principal Entrance) a *Dorick*, than a *Corinthian Garnishment*; so as if the great Door be arched, with some brave Head cut in fine Stone or Marble for the Key of the Arch, and two incumbent Figures gracefully leaning upon it, towards one another, as if they meant to confer; I should think this a sufficient Entertainment for the first Reception of any judicious Sight, which I could wish seconded with two great standing Statues on each side of a paved Way, that shall lead up into the Fabrick, so as the Beholder at the first entrance may pass his eye between them.

That the Niches, if they contain Figures of white Stone or Marble, be not coloured in their Concavity too black; for though *Contraria juxta se posita magis illucescunt* (by an old Rule) yet it hath been subtilly, and indeed truly, noted, that out Sight is not well contented with those sudden Departments from one Extream to another; therefore let them have rather a duskish Tincture, than an absolute Black.

That fine and delicate *Sculptures* be helped with Nearness, and Gross with Distance; which was well seen in the old Controversy between Phidias and Alcmenes about the Statue of Venus: Wherein the first did shew Discretion, and save Labour; because the Work was to be viewed at good Height, which did drown the sweet and diligent Strokes of his Adversary: A famous Emulation of two principal Atizans, celebrated even by the Greek Poets.

That in the placing of standing Figures aloft, we must set them in a Posture somewhat bowing forward; because (saith our Master, Lib. 3, Cap. 3, out of a better Art than his own) the visual Beam of our Eye, extended to the Head of the said Figures, being longer than to the Foot, must necessarily make that Part appear farther; so as to reduce it to an erect or upright Position, there must be allowed a due Advantage of stooping towards us; which Albert Durer hath exactly taught, in his forementioned Geometry. Our Vitruvius calleth this Affection in the Eye, a Resupination of the Figure: For which Word (being in truth his own, for aught I know) we are almost as much beholding to him, as for the Observation itself: And let thus much summarily suffice, touching the choice and use of these adorning Arts. For to speak of garnishing the Fabrick with a Row of erected Statues about the Cornice of every Contignation or Story, were Discourse more proper for Athens or Rome, in the time of their true Greatness, when (as Pliny recordeth of his Age) there were near as many carved Images as living Men; like a noble Contention, even in point of Fertility, between Art and Nature; which Passage doth not only argue an infinite abundance both of Artizans and Materials, but likewise of magnificent and majestical Desires in every common Person of those Times, more or less according to their Fortunes. And true it is indeed, that the Marble Monuments and Memories of well-deserving Men, wherewith the very Highways were strewed on each side, was not a bare and transitory Entertainment of the Eye, or only a gentle Deception of Time to the Traveller, but had also a secret and strong Influence, even into the advancement of the Monarchy, by continual Representation of Virtuous Examples; so as in that Point, Art became a Piece of State.

Now, as I have before subordinated *Picture* and *Sculpture* to *Architecture*, as their Mistress; so there are certain inferior Arts likewise subordinate to them: As under *Picture*, *Mosaic*; under *Sculpture*, *Plastick*; which two I only nominate, as the fittest to garnish Fabricks.

Mosaick is a kind of Painting in small Pebbles, Cockles and Shells of sundry Colours; and of late Days, likewise of pieces of Glass, figured at pleasure; an Ornament, in truth, of much Beauty, and long Life, but of most use in Pavements and Floorings.

Plastick is not only under *Sculpture*, but indeed very *Sculpture* itself; but with this difference, that the Plaisterer doth make his Figures by Addition, and the Carver by Substraction: whereupon Michael Angelo was wont to say somewhat pleasantly, that *Sculpture* was nothing but a Purgation of Superfluities: For take away from a piece of Wood, or Stone, all that is superfluous, and the Remainder is the intended Figure. Of this *Plastick* Art, the chief use with us is in the graceful fretting of Roofs; but the Italians apply it to the mantelling of Chimneys, with great Figures; a cheap piece of Magnificance, and as durable almost within-doors, as harder Forms in the Weather. And here, though it be a little Excursion, I cannot pass unremembered again, their manner of disguishing the Shapes of Chimneys in various Fashions, whereof the noblest is the Pyramidal; being, in truth, a piece of polite and civil Discretion, to convert even the Conduits of Soot and Smoak into Ornaments; whereof I have hitherto spoken so far as may concern the Body of the Building.

Now there are Ornaments also without, as Gardens, Fountains, Groves, Conservatories of rare Beasts, Birds, and Fishes: Of which ignobler kind of Creatures, *We ought not* (saith our greatest * Master among the Sons of Nature) *childishly to despise the Contemplation; for in all things that are natural there is ever something that is admirable.* Of these external Delights, a Word or two.

(*To be continued.*)

VENTILATION, AND INTERMENT IN TOWNS. —Mr. Parker has given notice of his intention to bring in a bill next session, "to enforce the ventilation of workshops in certain cases:" and Mr. Mackinnon has put a notice on the books, that he will "call the attention of the House to the necessity of forming some legislative enactment, in accordance with the Reports of the Committee on the Health of Towns, and of the Ecclesiastical Commission, in which the practice of interment in the large towns and under Churches and Chapels is recommended to be abolished."

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* Arist. lib. 1, Cap. 5, de part. Anim. Δεῖ μὴ δυσχεραίνειν παιδικῶς τὴν περὶ τῶν ἀτιμοτέρων ζώων ἐπίσκεψιν. Ἐν πᾶσι γαρ τοῖς φυσικοῖς ἐνεστίν θαυμαστόν.

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